

Savanna's Act

Background

Savanna's Act (The Act) became law on October 10, 2020. The bill is named after Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a member of the Spirit Lake Nation of North Dakota, who was murdered while she was eight months pregnant in August 2017. She was 22 years old.

The Act aims to improve data collection of missing or murdered Native Americans, clarify the responsibilities of Tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies responding to cases of missing or murdered Native Americans, and empower Tribal governments with resources and information necessary to effectively respond to such cases. The Act also directs the Department of Justice (DOJ) to review, revise, and develop law enforcement and justice protocols to address missing and murdered Native Americans.

Overview

Savanna's Act aims to improve the response to missing and murdered Native Americans by requiring the DOJ to:

- Provide training to law enforcement agencies on how to record Tribal enrollment for victims in federal databases.
- Develop and implement a strategy to educate the public on the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
- Conduct specific outreach to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations regarding the ability to publicly enter information through NamUs or other non-law enforcement sensitive portal.
- Develop regionally appropriate guidelines for response to cases of missing or murdered Native Americans.
- Provide training and technical assistance to Tribes and law enforcement agencies for implementation of the developed guidelines.
- Report statistics on missing or murdered Native Americans.

The bill authorizes the DOJ to:

- Provide grants for the purposes of developing and implementing policies and protocols for law enforcement regarding cases of missing or murdered Native Americans, and
- Provide grants for the purposes of compiling and annually reporting data relating to missing or murdered Native Americans.

Additionally, the bill directs:

- Federal law enforcement agencies to modify their guidelines to incorporate the guidelines developed by DOJ, and
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to include gender in its annual statistics on missing and unidentified persons published on its website.

About the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center:

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Inc. (NIWRC) is a Native-led nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against Native women and children. NIWRC provides national leadership in ending gender-based violence in Tribal communities by lifting up the collective voices of grassroots advocates and offering culturally grounded resources, technical assistance and training, and policy development to strengthen Tribal sovereignty. niwrc.org

This fact sheet was made possible by Grant Number 90EV0533 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

niwrc.org

515 Lame Deer Ave. Lame Deer, MT 59043 **Phone** 406.477.3896 **Toll-Free** 855.649.7299 **Email** info@niwrc.org